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With Heating Costs Rising...

Safety Tips For Wood Burning Stove Users

With the increasing natural gas and fuel oil heating costs, many homeowners are turning to wood burning stoves to keep their home warm this winter. Beware, that while you are saving money, you may increase your risk of a home fire.

Most homeowners have a very limited experience with wood burning stoves. Buy your wood burning stove from a reputable business - one who can help you select the correct stove for your home needs. Plate steel and cast iron stoves last longer and retain heat for longer periods of time. If you do purchase a used stove, inspect it thoroughly for cracks, defective legs, hinges, door seals and draft louvers.

Have the stove professionally installed. A professional heating contractor will make sure there is adequate air space clearances and circulation around the stove. While a professional installation may cost you money, this service will make sure that heat radiating from the stove or chimney will not ignite adjacent combustible materials, prevent sparks from escaping into the house and prevent sparks from escaping from the chimney.

Use your stove correctly. Use short hot fires rather than long smoldering fires. Do not leave the stove unattended or when children are present. Do not store dry wood near or under the stove. Do not use gasoline, kerosene or charcoal starter to start a fire. Do not burn trash in your stove. Empty all ashes into a metal container with a tight fitting lid. Install smoke detectors in your house!

Finally, chimneys should be inspected frequently. Because creosote buildup varies greatly depending on the type of wood, usage and stove model, have your chimney cleaned by a professional chimney sweep. Chemical cleaners are not always effective. It is important to inspect and clean your chimney frequently. If you have a chimney fire, have the chimney inspected by a professional before using the chimney again.